



REGERINGSKANSLIET

8 July 2004

**Ministry of the Environment
Sweden**

Minister for the Environment

Robert MacLean
Crowell & Moring
71 Rue Royale
B-1000 Brussels
Belgium

Dear Mr. Robert MacLean,

Thank you for your letter dated 1th of May 2004 in which you express concerns by the actions taken by the Swedish government to prepare for a ban of all brominated flame-retardants. With this letter I would like to explain the position and actions of the Swedish government concerning flame-retardants.

Chemicals belonging to the group of brominated flame-retardants is a prioritised issue in Sweden since many years. Some of the chemicals belonging to this group have been highlighted as hazardous for the environment and human health. Elevated levels have been found in the environment and in human breast milk. The Swedish policy is to take preventive actions and look for safer alternatives for the most hazardous chemicals of this group.


Within the European Union measures have been taken against brominated flame-retardants. PBB was banned already in 1983 for use in textiles. Last year pentaBDE and octaBDE were restricted for marketing and use in products. Measures were also taken to ban PBDE and PBB in electrical and electronic equipment.

Concerning your statement on the matter of a Swedish ban on all brominated flame- retardants I would like to clarify the following: The Swedish government decided on the 6th of May this year to prepare a national ban only for decaBDE. In the decision an assignment was given to our responsible agency, the Swedish Chemicals Inspectorate, to compile a national notification to ban decaBDE. The assignment includes an analysis of the consequences of introducing a national ban with an assessment of available alternatives that are better from an environmental and health standpoint. Furthermore, the outcome of the

EU Competent Authority meeting on the 26-27 May regarding the EU risk assessment on decaBDE should be analysed and reported to the Swedish government.

The Swedish Chemicals Inspectorate will present its conclusions to the Swedish government at the end of November this year. Thereafter a final decision will be taken regarding a potential national ban on decaBDE. When the Swedish government takes such a decision it will of course be within the legal framework of the European Union.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lena Sommestad', written in a cursive style.

Lena Sommestad
Minister for the Environment